

PROCOPIUS'S AFRICAN MONUMENT OF JOSHUA'S  
CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

NARRATIVE OF A VISIT TO THE SITE.

BY

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BEING A PAPER READ BEFORE THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE.

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AUTHOR'S COPY.



Professor Goldwin Smith  
in token of  
the Author's esteem.

21. vii. 1902.  
neon beneficiorum memor.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.\*

DAVID HOWARD, ESQ., D.L., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

“*PROCOPIUS'S AFRICAN MONUMENT OF JOSHUA'S CONQUEST OF CANAAN*”; *Narrative of a visit to the Site.* By MARTIN L. ROUSE, Esq. (Barrister-at-Law).

TO most of my hearers, I think, as to the vast majority of thoughtful Britons, the existence at any time of the monument with which this paper deals is quite unknown. I myself, I will confess, had never heard of it until about three years ago, when I read in the religious newspaper called the *Morning Star* these words: “Somewhere or other Procopius has recorded that in his time there stood in North Africa a stone thus inscribed—‘We are they who escaped from Joshua the robber, the son of Nun.’”

The words lay dormant in my mind for a long time; if I thought of them, it was only to say to myself, “The information is too vague; and anyhow, such a stone must long have been buried in the sand or broken up for building material, its inscription worn away amid the vicissitudes of settlement, conquest, and reconquest by tribes who could not read its characters, and who had no reverence for antiquities other than the relics of Mahomet.” But at the beginning of last

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\* Monday, May 5th, 1902.



year the reflection forced itself upon me, "If the letters were so deeply cut as to be readable two thousand years after they were inscribed, why should they not be readable now? Is it not likely that the atmosphere of North Africa, so famous for its dryness, failed to destroy them as the atmosphere of the Orient has failed to destroy those of so many monuments of Babylonian and Assyrian kings?" My curiosity could no longer be restrained. I broke away from other studies at the British Museum to ransack the writings of Procopius for this allusion, which after all might be much more explicit than the rough quotation that I had read. And my search was presently rewarded by my finding in the second book of that author's history of the Vandal War a good deal more information than I expected.

And now a word as to Procopius and his times. In A.D. 395 was made the final division of the Roman dominion into the Empires of the West and of the East, with their respective capitals at Rome and at Byzantium, or Constantinople; in A.D. 439 Carthage and the whole of Western North Africa fell beneath the arms of the Vandals; and in A.D. 476 Rome and its surrounding territory were finally absorbed into the Gothic kingdom of Italy. But the reign of the Eastern Emperor Justinian, between A.D. 527 and 565, revived the prospect of a renewal of the palmiest days of Roman rule. By means of his great generals Belisarius and Narses and the armies that they raised, largely recruited from the newly settled barbarians, he not only kept all invaders from the Danube to the Tigris at bay, but wrested all Italy back from the Goths, and North Africa from the Vandals, restoring those countries to a domination that was called "Roman" still; while, like the most prudent of his predecessors, he covered his dominions with fortified towns, roads, and bridges, building also numerous churches and other ecclesiastical edifices. But his chief fame rests upon his procuring a complete codification of the Roman law and a digest of all Roman judicial decisions, which have maintained their authority in some European countries down to this very day, and provided a foundation for our first writers upon international law. Justinian's predecessor, in the last year of his reign, appointed one Procopius, lawyer and teacher of rhetoric in Constantinople, to be "assessor"—that is evidently civil adviser—to Belisarius; and the assessor accompanied the great commander in all his wars in Armenia, Persia, Africa, and Italy.

The chief incidents of those wars, the building and road-making of Justinian, and other events of his times have been most fully recorded by Procopius. It is from his writings that we almost entirely draw our knowledge of this stirring and momentous period. Of him the *English Cyclopædia* says: "Procopius was well informed and unprejudiced; he was a spectator of, and an actor in, most of the events which he narrates." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* has no remark upon his accuracy. Krumbacher in his work on Byzantine literature says: "Procopius unites a high degree of literary form with an admirable love of truth." Mr. W. S. Teuffel, in his *Studies and Character Sketches*, says: "Procopius takes among historians throughout an honourable position, both with regard to his sentiments and to his portrayal of events. He strove with earnestness and honesty to tell the truth. Kanngiesser, while on the whole he does not praise our historian so much as the other modern reviewers, has a note upon the topic in question most favourable to his accuracy therein, which note we shall quote in its due place.

In the first book of *The Vandal War* it is narrated how, chiefly by the aid of his Hunnish auxiliaries (whom Belisarius had contrived to discipline, although they seem to have inspired terror by their mere aspect), the great captain overthrew the armies of King Gelimir; how Carthage and other cities threw open their gates to the Byzantine host; and how anon Gelimir and a large number of captives sailed away: but how, alas! Belisarius, who would have stayed until perfect order was established, was himself obliged to depart for that city to clear himself from the slanders of the envious; although, fortunately, he left a good lieutenant-general—one Solomon—behind him. Meanwhile, the Moors, who had already made head against the Vandals, grew bolder in face of the feeble opposition of Libyans and Romans, who had served the Vandals; and many were their raids against persons and property. Before telling of these, and of the war that followed, Procopius, in his 2nd book,\* says: "And, since our narrative has brought us thus far, it is needful to tell from the beginning whence the tribes of the Moors came into Libya, and in what manner they settled there. When the Hebrews had departed from Egypt and were near the borders of Palestine, Moses, the wise man, who had been their leader on the journey, died.

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\* Second Book, chapter 10.



But he was succeeded in the leadership by Joshua, the child of Nave, who led that people into Palestine, and, displaying a more than human valour, took possession of the country; and then, overthrowing all the nations [in battle], he easily captured the cities, and seemed altogether invincible. Now, at that time, the coast land from Sidon as far as the boundary of Egypt was unitedly called Phœnicia; and one king anciently ruled over the whole, as is agreed among all who have recorded the earliest doings of the Phœnicians. In that region had dwelt [until then] very populous nations—both Gergesites and Jebusites and other tribes, by whatever name the history of the Hebrews calls them. And when this people saw the invading army to be an irresistible host, rising up from the haunts of their fathers, they departed into the neighbouring land of Egypt. But, not finding room enough to settle in (since in Egypt there was abundance of people from of old), they journeyed on into Libya; and, building many cities, they took possession of all Libya up to the Pillars\* of Hercules; and down to my time they have dwelt [there], using the Phœnician language.

"Moreover they built a fortress in a Numidian city, where now stands the city Tigisis, and bears the name; [and] near to its great fountain† there are two pillars\* made of white stone‡ having Phœnician letters carved upon them and speaking in the Phœnician language thus: 'We are they who escaped from the face of Joshua, the robber, the son of Nave.'

"There were also other tribes already dwelling in Libya who, because they had been settled there from ancient times, were said to be 'sprung from the soil'; and thence it happened that Antæus, their king, who wrestled with Hercules in Clipeas, was called a son of Earth.

"Moreover, at a later time, all who migrated from Phœnicia in the train of Dido, because they had come among their kinsfolk already settled in Libya, were readily permitted to build Carthage and possess it. But, as time went on, the power of the Carthaginians grew great and their people numerous, and a battle was fought between them and their neighbours, the former colonists, who, as

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\* Gr. *στηλαι*, *buttresses*, *posts*, or *pillars*.

† Or *well*; Gr. *κρήνη*.

‡ Or *stones*; *λιθων*.

we said, had come from Palestine, and are now called Moors; and the Carthaginians got the mastery of them, and forced them to live as far away from Carthage as possible. And, later on, the Romans, getting the upper hand of all men, in war, settled the Moors in the extreme confines of the inhabited part of Libya, and made both the Carthaginians and the rest of the Libyans subject to themselves for the raising of tribute. But, later still, the Moors, having won many victories over the Vandals, came to hold both what is now called Mauritania, stretching from Gadeira to Cæsarea [that is from opposite Cadiz to Shershel], and most of the districts in the rest of Libya. In much this manner did the phases of Moorish settlement in Libya follow one another."

But Numidia is a wide word. Does Procopius, I asked myself, give no other clue to the position of this stone record? Yes, I found that he adverted once, though only once, to the vanished Numidian Tigisis; and this allusion contains much to help us to fix its locality, besides being the pivot of a fascinating tale. At the outset of Chapter 13 of the same book, he says:—

"Now, while these things were happening in Byzacium, Jabdas, who reigned over the Moors in Aurasium, having gathered together 30,000 fighting men, was plundering the towns and villages of Numidia and carrying off many Libyans as slaves. And it happened that Althias commanded a guard among the regular troops attached to the forts there; and, being eager to release some of the captives from the enemy, he sallied out of his fort with the Huns that he commanded, being about seventy in number. But, deeming that in actual fighting he was no match with seventy men for so great a host of Moors, he aimed at seizing some narrow passage; so that, as the enemy were making their way through it, he might be able to rescue some of their prisoners. Now, since there is no such passage in that district (for round all its towns and villages there are only gentle slopes), he hit upon the following plan: there is a city somewhere\* near, Tigisis by name, which was at the time well fortified and had a large fountain† standing in a narrow pass; this place Althias

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\* *πρυ*, which may possibly, however, mean *somewhat* (in contrast with the usage of *οὐδαμῶς*, see p. 6, note \*).

† See p. 4, note †.



learnt how to seize, reflecting that the enemy, compelled by thirst, would be certain to come to the fountain, no other water being at all near. (To all who reflected on the disproportion in numbers his plan seemed that of a mad-man.)

"The Moors, after marching in column with hard toil and much stifling from the [heat of] summer-time, and probably from that cause suffering from the keenest thirst, came to the fountain with a great rush, not dreaming of any opposition. But, when they found the water held by the enemy, they all stood still, at a loss what to do, for most of their strength was already spent in their craving for water. Jabdas therefore came to a parley with Althias, and offered to give him the third part of the booty, after which surely the Moors might all quench their thirst. But Althias would by no means\* accept the proposal, but demanded that the other should fight him in single combat on their behalf; and, Jabdas having accepted the challenge, it was agreed that, in case Althias was worsted, the Moors should drink."

I conclude in the quaint language of an old English translator:—

"Who were glad and confident, seeing Althias a lean man, not tall; whereas Jabdas was the goodliest and valiantest of all the Moors. They were on horseback; and Jabdas threw first his javelin, which Althias caught flying at him in his right hand (which amazed his enemy), and with his left hand bent his bow (being both-handed) and killed Jabdas' horse. The Moors brought their prince another horse, upon which he leaped up, and ran away; the Moors following in disorder. Althias recovered the captives and booty, and got a great name in Africk for this act."†

The fountain or well of Tigris, then, was far removed from any other; it was in a narrow pass between two heights; and it was very well fortified. Having determined this, my next step was to consult Kiepert's classical atlas; in which I found the Numidian town of Tigris at a point about 45 English miles north of the first slopes of Aurasium

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\* οὐδαμῇ, primarily *nowhere*, but freely used by the best authors for *in no wise* and *not at all* (*L. and S. Lex.*).

† Translation by Henry Holcroft, Knight (*Hist. Warres Justinian*, 1653, Book II, chap. ix, p. 37), verified by me, except that the first words ought to be "*The whole army of the Moors was glad.*"



(or the Aures Mountains), 185 miles south-west of Carthage, 96 miles west of the nearest point in the old province of Byzacium, and 53 miles south of the nearest coast town, Rusicade (or Philippeville), being identified with the Arabic settlement that bears the suggestive name of Ain el Bordj, or Well of the Castle. It must be carefully distinguished from Tigisi in Mauretania, which is found to have lain in the well-watered region of Kabylia, 373 miles from Carthage and 273 from Byzacium. Still less claim had Tingis, the modern Tangiers, to be considered the site of the monument, though travellers used to affirm it to be, since it lies more than 800 miles from Carthage and more than 900 from Byzacium.

At once I wrote to the editor of the ancient atlas, asking his reasons for the identification, and got a courteous reply from Herr Richard Kiepert, his father's successor in the great work, enclosing the evidence in the form of an inscription discovered at Ain el Bordj, which reads as follows:—

FLAVIO VALERIO  
CONSTANTIO  
NOBILISSIMO  
CAESARI  
ORDO TICISITANVS  
[D]EVOTVS NVMINI  
[M]AIESTATIQVE EIVS  
EX SVA CONLATIONE  
POSVIT IDEMQVE  
DEDICAVIT \*

Turned into English it would run:—

"To Flavius Valerius Constantius, the most noble emperor, the senate of Ticisis, devoted to his divinity and majesty, have, by subscription among themselves, set up and dedicated this monument."

The writing of C in TICISITANVS instead of G may be an imitation of the primitive Latin forms of inscription, wherein C stood for the sound or sounds of G, because this letter was not brought into the alphabet until B.C. 233; but it is much more likely that the sound in the name was variously pronounced by different nations or tribes, even as *weg* and *tag* in divers parts of Germany are made to end with the hard *g*, the *k*, or the *kh* sound, and even as, strange

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\* *Capus Inscrip. Lat.*, VIII, p 960, n. 10,820.

to say, the Arabs pronounce the name of another settlement *Tagasa*, while the French call it *Taxas*; of which more anon.

The explorer who found this important tablet was, as I have since learnt, a Monsieur Luciani; and his discovery was first reported in the *Journal of the Constantine Archæological Society* for 1878.

This, said Herr Kiepert (and I have since confirmed his words), was the only inscription found at Ain el Bordj that alluded to Tigisis; but he referred me to a Latin account of the bishops of Numidia which mentions Tigisis as a see (*Notitia Episcoparum Numidiæ*, N 89). A subsequent inquiry whether any effort had yet been made to recover the Canaanite pillars Herr Kiepert could not answer, but referred me for perusal to a description of North Africa, undertaken by order of the French Ministry of Public Instruction and of the Fine Arts, and to a history of Byzantine Africa by Charles Diehl. Of the Constantine Archæological Society and its labours I knew nothing; but these two books I decided to peruse after a pressure of other work was over in the summer months, and then in the month of October, when a European could walk and dig in Algeria, to spend a holiday in seeing what had been done or what could be done at the Arab village of the Well of the Castle to find the long-forgotten record.

There was then little question in my mind as to the accuracy of the story about the pillars; and there is less now. Kanngiesser, in the note before alluded to, says: "Procopius speaks of the pillars at Tigisis not as he is wont to do when he is dealing with doubtful and unauthenticated accounts, but with certainty. Even if he did not, as is likely, see those pillars himself, the ambassadors that came from the Moorish chieftains, and the hostages whom they brought, may well have given him precise information, while the Roman officers may have easily convinced themselves of their existence." Procopius, again, after accompanying Belisarius upon his first expedition to Africa, as he positively tells us, in all probability returned with him as his assessor, when two years later he crossed over from Sicily to quell a mutiny: the lawyer and assessor would naturally be required to help him in the trial of accused soldiers. The exploit of Althias, by which he won "so great a name in Africk," must, when it was known, have drawn many leading Byzantines to visit the scene of it, the well of Tigisis; and if Procopius

was not one of these, as well he may have been, there would at least be many to report to him how strangely that well was adorned. Now Augustine of Hippo tells us that in his time the Carthaginians and the peasants around Carthage called themselves Canaanites, and that the language of the Carthaginians was just like Hebrew; while Jerome also says that the Punic (or Carthaginian) and the Hebrew tongue differed little from each other; and Jerome died as late as 420 A.D., and Augustine ten years later still.\* Are we to suppose that this Phœnician language, which had survived the Roman yoke for 500 years, was crushed out by Vandal rule in 100? Of course not. Therefore there were plenty of educated men of Punic (Phœnician or Canaanite) speech who could interpret the words upon the pillars to Althias and Procopius.

But an accidental circumstance greatly hastened my departure for Numidia. Early in the month of May I learnt that a friend of mine, long settled in Tunis, was about to start for a fortnight's recreation, or change of employment, in visiting the chain of Mount Aures (the Aurasium mentioned in the second quotation) that he might gain a first knowledge of the Shawia language for a missionary society under whom he works; and, as he has an exceedingly good knowledge of Arabic in its various dialects, and I had none, I thought the opportunity of combining our travels was not to be missed. So, finding, through correspondence, that he would be in Constantine by Saturday, the 25th, I started from London on the evening of the 21st, reached Marseilles very early on the 23rd, leaving thence at noon, crossed the Mediterranean in 31 hours to Philippeville, and very early the next morning wound my way up through the mountains to that wondrous city on a rock, Constantine, the ancient Cirta.

The following Tuesday morning saw us rumbling in the train to Taxas, which I had ascertained to be the nearest railway station for Ain el Bordj, from which it is 14 kilometers distant in the great plain of Beheira el Twila. But, finding on his way that the Arabs called this station not Taxas but Tagasa, and that there was a well 4 kilometers off to the south (from which it had evidently taken its name) called by them "Ain Tagasa," my friend reminded me that

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\* Quoted in the *Annuaire of the Société Archéologique de Constantine*, Vol. XIX, pp. 103-104.



there had been a bishopric of Tigisis, and urged that possibly the title on the stone at Ain el Bordj "senate of Tigisis" referred to a whole district which had really taken its name from the well still called "Ain Tagasa." We therefore decided to visit this well in the first place. Arriving at the spot, we found the ruins of a Roman well—many squared stones forming a right angle about the spring; while a single squared stone about six feet long by two wide and thick was lying prostrate hard by. I wished at once to lift this and examine the hidden side; but I was told that we must wait until an official, who lived in a house close by, had returned home, in three hours' time. So, being informed that there were ruins upon a ridge within a kilometer of the well and remains of a wall, we ascended the ridge which rose from a point about a quarter of a mile away and presently came, upon its crest, to the bases of several houses, from which parallel walls, seeming to continue theirs, ran on for a great distance, keeping to the top of the ridge. We learnt at the same time that a great quantity of stone from former ruins there had been carried off to make roads with; so we were the more convinced that what we saw were the bases of demolished walls. Moreover, on the crest of a parallel ridge starting from the other side of the well there seemed very clearly to be a wall standing up several feet above the short grass all the way along. But when we had covered about 5 kilometers up to another small set of ruins in the intervening valley, and saw the parallel walls on both ridges running more than as far again without meeting, we were convinced that, after all, our walls were only denuded edges of rocky strata! On the opposite ridge, by which we returned, we found the phenomenon still more striking, for the face of the rocky wall was divided into oblong blocks in two tiers with joints both vertical and horizontal, the vertical joints not being continuous in the two tiers, but a joint being over a block and a block over a joint. It was only when one carefully examined the top of the rocky wall that one was undeceived by seeing the joint end about two feet back and two blocks unite into one great block in the rear. On subsequent journeys I saw once or twice like formations on other hills.

Picnicking upon this ridge with our Arab guides, we had a short siesta, and then returned to the well, where the French official now allowed and superintended the raising of the stone. Alas! there was no writing upon it; and he declared

that upon two other blocks that he had carted away there was also no inscription, for he had strict orders to take every inscribed stone to the museum at Sigus, a town about eight miles to the west of Taxas, where many antiquities have been found. But on other grounds I perceived that Ain Tagasa could not have been the well spoken of by Procopius; for, even if a town fenced in by the two ridges had guarded the approach to the well, the well itself was in no narrow pass, but on the open plain.

That evening, as we waited at Taxas station until eight o'clock for the second up train of the day (so scanty is the passenger traffic upon those railways), my friend met with Shawis in an Arab house—one of the half-dozen dwellings that surround the lonely station of Taxas. They gladly gave him a host of Shawia words, which he marshalled according to sense in columns parallel to those culled from other Berber dialects, soon finding Shawia to be a true Berber language; and meanwhile the goodman of the house had kusskuss prepared for us and steeped coffee, and presently I was called over from the station and warned not to wound the hospitable feelings of the goodman by offering any payment. This friendliness was the more remarkable in that my companion had not shunned to deliver them the message of his Lord and Saviour. Thus, sitting down with crossed legs upon mats spread upon the earthen floor, we enjoyed our novel food and our well-brewed drink, when what was my pleasure to learn that our entertainers knew of another ancient well only 4 kilometers on the opposite, or northern, side of Taxas station, and one which Europeans never approached, therefore all the more likely to have by its side the undiscovered pillars of Procopius. The name, too, by which it was known to the French Government—"Ain el 'Atâsh"—was most suggestive; for did not this mean Well of Thirst, and was it not likely that by some old tradition it got the name in memory of the baffling by Althias of the thirsty Moors? It is true that present-day Arabs had forgotten this tradition, if it ever existed, for they instead called the spot El G'soor—the strongholds, while the name Well of Thirst may have been given to it simply because the French map makers found the well dry, as it has long been. But we were determined to see and search for ourselves. Unfortunately there was no sort of inn at Taxas; so we had to return that night, more than two hours' journey by rail, to Constantine. But we were determined

to come back the next morning, hire horses, and visit both Ain el Bordj and Ain el 'Atâsh, which lay almost on the way to it. I may add that the usual route for Ain el Bordj was not through Taxas but through Sigus, so that Ain el 'Atâsh was seldom or never seen by Frenchmen, few of whom know even that there is such a place as Ain el Bordj. Tourists of course never visit these mere ruins, which contain no restored temples, baths, and gateways like those of Lambessa and Timgad.

Alas! when we returned early on the morrow, and my friend had gone to the Arab's house and asked him to find horses for the expedition, a stranger introduced himself to him as the Kaid of Ain el Bordj, who had control both of that settlement and of Ain el 'Atâsh, and said that no one must visit either place without his permission; nor could he give it unless he first received instructions from the administrator of Ain M'lilla—to which place if we had gone by rail, we reckoned that we should have lost two days. The end of it was that we had to employ our horses to take us first about 20 kilometers out of our way, so that we might get permission, if possible, from the brigadier, or chief constable, at Ain Fakrun. Armed with his permission, we returned to Ain el 'Atâsh. At this place we found a very large round well with a well preserved wall about it; but at a depth of about 50 feet the stones I threw in sank into mud. On two sides of it the ruins stretched, nine in number. They were stately ruins with large chambers, around which the broken walls stood up frequently 5 feet high, with posts 6 and 8 feet, and many a pillar, trough, and pipe cut in stone, the outer and inner inclosure of an atrium being distinctly traceable in one case by the rows of pillars still erect. We both searched carefully for inscriptions; but not one did we find, until when the sun was nearly setting, and our muleteer had twice urged us to depart, and when it was too late to send to the nearest Arab camp for a pick and shovel (if, perchance, they had any), I lighted upon a stone buried nearly to its head but clearly faced with a hard black cement as though for carving on. I made a note of its position and have since told the Constantine Archæological Society about it. But, whatever it will show, it can hardly be the inscription of Procopius; for it was not near the well, nor did this well lie in a narrow pass between two heights, but still far into the same great plain.

Thus false scents and official hindrance had prevented me



hitherto from reaching my longed-for destination (although our visits to Ain Tagasa and Ain el 'Atâsh had been negatively useful); and the exigencies of the programme of my missionary friend, Mr. George B. Michell, forced me when next we quitted Constantine to accompany him and another missionary, Mr. James Lochhead, who had been my host there, upon a tour to the south and south-east to view the tomb of Massinissa, the city of Timgad, and other ruins nigh thereto.

But on the 9th of June, with the full sanction of the Prefect of Constantine, and accompanied by Khoodhir, a Christian Arab youth, I made my way to Ain Abid, a market town fifteen miles north of Ain el Bordj, meaning to sleep at its inn, so as to start early in the morning and look round Ain el Bordj before the heat of the day. At a quarter to five we were in the saddle; and, mostly walking but sometimes trotting or ambling, we crossed a great plateau covered with barley and bearded wheat for a little over six miles, and then pierced a range of hills and wound our way down and through them for three miles more, until at half-past seven we were watering our horses at the French fountain of Ain el Bordj, adorned with a Roman pillar at its head.

We were standing at the mouth of a pass, and looking up it to the north we saw on the left the heights down and around which we had been coming, and on our right a steep slope covered with the ruins of an ancient city, while another hill was seen beyond it severed from it by a deep ravine. About 200 yards up the pass was a Roman fountain with a set of stone troughs feeding one another, and to the left and a little behind it a solid piece of wall about 4 feet high, probably Roman, covered with slabs and forming a right angle that embraced a tiny pool, while about 200 yards farther the first traces of the spring were to be seen amid moist, rank grass.

On the other hand, as we had crossed the upper plateau from Ain Abid and descended through the hills, covering  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles, we had not passed a single well, or seen one to the right hand or the left, still less any stream of water; and our Arab guide assured us there was not one. The only house that we saw all the way—a new farmhouse upon the northern slope of the hills, with a group of new buildings about it, the property of a French settler—may have possessed a new well recently bored; but the guide declared

that it had none, and in any case it must have been quite a recent boring. Again, south-eastward and south-westward along the hills we had crossed there was no spring as far as Ain Fakrun, eleven miles off one way, and probably as far as Sigus, ten miles off the other way, while southward there was not one up to the muddy well of Ain el Atash,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant; and the little stream that flowed forth at our feet spent itself in a couple of miles on the thirsty ground. The hills near at hand looked arid, but especially the further of two that encroached to the south upon the plain of Behira el Twila; from top to bottom it showed not the slightest sign of vegetation, and was consequently known as the Bald Mountain.

Thus at Ain el Bordj were two of the special features of the well of Tigisis most clearly displayed. The third was also visible. A large fragment of the city wall, about 20 yards long and 18 feet high, crowned the slope on the east side of our pass, while fragments stretched along the descending brow of the cliff until they almost touched the Roman fountain. Right easy must it have been to protect the fountain from all intruders by means of archers posted on the wall. And how substantial that wall was! It had a facing of squared stones both inside and outside 18 inches thick; while between the facings lay 4 feet of rubble stones, mostly of great size. The squared stones that had once covered the rest of the wall were strewn over the ruined site of the town in vast confusion.

That site itself measured about a third of a mile from south-east to north-west by a quarter of a mile from south-west to north-east, and the series of Arab huts upon it and as many more dismantled huts were walled with its fragments and sometimes upheld by its pillars.

The Arabs were eager to show me inscriptions, and I copied in all seven Latin ones, which I show you to-day; but I could not hear of a single one in any characters but Roman, although I carefully drew both Phœnician and cuneiform characters and showed them to our guides as patterns.

Our guides were tolerably exacting, for they made me pay in all 4 francs 50 centimes for the privilege of looking at and copying the stone writings; but a man brought us a bowl of sheep's milk and charged us nothing therefor. The Arabs in Algeria regularly milk their ewes. It was the second time in my life that I had tasted sheep's milk; and this time I found it delicious.

It took me a good while to visit the different inscribed stones, clear away rubbish in some cases with a pick or a knife, and copy them, examine the size of the city, photograph the wells, and pay an abortive visit to the house of the Kaid, a mile and a half away. So I was glad of a two hours' break in the middle of the day, during which I lay on a mat in an Arab hut propped against a Roman pillar, and presently enjoyed kusskuss and hard-boiled eggs. In return for these comforts I handed my host two francs, being careful to use a phrase that I had learnt to be customary, "For your son!"

The sun had just sunk to rest and the Arab dogs were barking merrily and running wildly about as our horses once more entered the precincts of Ain Abid. I had seen and confirmed the identity of the fountain of Tigisis; and, if funds had permitted, I could scarcely have done more, for the Prefect had told me that without the sanction of a Department of State I might not lift a single stone from the ground.

I returned to Constantine next morning; and, before quitting my hospitable headquarters, I explored the wonderful Gorge Rhummel which half encircles the town at the back and is 400 feet deep. There I saw the two baths of warm mineral water, passed under the tunnel in the limestone rock, 150 feet high and 200 yards long, beneath which the river pursues its hidden way, and observed the Roman forum, gateway, and aqueduct built upon the tunnel, and yet more than a hundred feet below the graceful bridge which now leads from the city to the railway.

That bridge I crossed for the last time at six o'clock on the morning of the 13th of June. I was in Philippeville about nine, and had just time to visit the Roman theatre and eat a lunch when the steamer started which carried me back to Marseilles.

Arriving in Paris on the night of Monday, the 16th, I next day called at the office at the Ministry of Education which has control of public monuments; and its head presently referred me to Professor Cagnat, of the *Institut*, "whom," said he, "we should ourselves have to consult ere we gave permission to an outsider to excavate." The professor was most kind, and gave me a very long interview; in the course of which we consulted all authorities, and found that five out of the seven inscriptions that I had copied, although not of great consequence, had not been seen by Europeans



before, as also that the Archæological Society of Constantine (of which I now for the first time heard) had made some search for Procopius's pillars in 1880, but had had to abandon the search for want of funds. They had, however, as they expressly said, been encouraged to look further; for, after digging at a certain point three trenches 1 metre 40 cm. wide and about 100 metres in total length and meeting as a triangle, they had come upon a group of pillars of many different heights and diameters, which had evidently been brought together from divers parts of the city; and they judged it likely that the inscribed pillars of Procopius had been brought to the same point along with them. The report of the same society tells that the Arab historian Bekri, who wrote in the eleventh century, speaks of this Tigisi as a flourishing city in his time: and it is likely that some Berber chieftain of those days gathered pillars from divers quarters to adorn the forecourt of his palace; and, if so, he probably, for curiosity's if not for beauty's sake, carried the fountain pillars bearing that strange inscription in a forgotten alphabet along with them.

Again, the desire to preserve what still was regarded as a tribal heirloom from the risks attending the numerous sieges of those days may equally have led to its being carried from its exposed position by the well to the heart of the city, where the group of pillars was found.

The professor's advice to me was to get English antiquarians and students of Bible history to help the Constantine society to complete their task rather than attempt to carry it out myself alone or with English friends; since the Arabs would charge Englishmen for every foot of earth they stirred, whereas the French society has a legal right to dig where it will. And, indeed, a society that directly the site was identified surveyed it and began excavating upon it ought rightly to be treated as captains in any further digging into this mine of history.

At the end of last September, after further perusing the reports of the Constantine Archæological Society at the British Museum, I wrote to the Society's President, Mons. Gustave Mercier, telling him of my visit to the three possible sites of the Numidian Tigisis, and how I had confirmed Mons. Luciani's identification of it with Ain el Bordj, expressing my gratitude to them as pioneers of the important search, and giving weighty reasons why they should renew it; and two months later I got a most cordial

and gratifying reply, in which the President said that the Society had resolved after reading my letter to incorporate its substance in their annual report, and at an early date to recommence the digging at Ain el Bordj. To this I quickly replied with hearty thanks, and a question whether monetary help from England would be agreeable to the Society, in case they had not funds enough to complete the work; and an answer came in February that the Society were deeply touched by my offer to raise funds for them, but to accept funds from a foreign source would tend to create difficulties for them (doubtless because of the strong anti-English feeling recently shown in Algeria). On the other hand, wrote the President, if the Society's fresh operations did not bring the precious monument to light, my English friends and I should apply direct for permission for ourselves to excavate at Ain el Bordj. Unfortunately the Society's funds would allow them to make only a "summary" search, but Ain el Bordj was "inscribed on the programme of their next operations." In his former letter Mons. Mercier had said that he would let me know what were the results of their fresh excavations; and, if those are in the least encouraging, the Christian men of England, the lovers of Bible antiquities who desire to make the stones bear further witness to the Divine record, should not rest until they have searched every corner of this ancient Libyan town.

If this old stone record is again brought to light, it will not only give us another striking proof of the truth of Bible history, but it will most probably establish a momentous point of chronology. We can hardly suppose that the two pillars jointly contained the one bare sentence quoted by Procopius. Rather is it to be expected that they contain the whole narrative of the migration of the bands of Canaanites which he himself recounts; and, if so, in telling that these failed to settle in Egypt, does not the inscription say what king of Egypt refused them a dwelling-place there? Thus we should establish from Israelitish and Egyptian sources combined the precise date of the Exodus; thus would be ended the seeming conflict between the lapse of time noted at the founding of Solomon's temple and the period obtained by summing-up the years of the Judges; and thus, too, we should make sure whether the Tell Amarna tablets do or do not recount from Canaanite contemporaries the Divine conquest of Canaan by the hand of Joshua.

## DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure we shall all join in thanking Mr. Rouse for the very interesting account he has given us of his researches, and we shall be glad to hear any remarks upon it.

The SECRETARY (Professor EDWARD HULL).—I might mention that the late Sir Lambert Playfair, who was Consul-General of Algeria for a number of years, and whom I had the pleasure of knowing, and meeting at the British Association from time to time, has written a very fine work on these Aures mountains and the remarkable Roman remains that are found therein.

I do not know whether I might give you a little anecdote that he told me himself. On one occasion when his party were about to explore these mountains they entered one of the valleys and seated themselves on the grass, and having brought out their provisions for the mid-day meal the wild inhabitants came down from the neighbouring mountains and assumed a threatening attitude towards them. They stood around and became more and more threatening. The explorers hardly knew what to do; but one of the party suggested a plan which was absolutely successful. They brought out some pots of jam, and opening them, they distributed the jam amongst the natives, with the result that they became friendly and no longer offered any opposition to their proceeding. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN.—I think we are all extremely indebted to the author of the paper for the minute and accurate observations which he has made in regard to this very interesting passage of Procopius's. It is true that we have not got the stone yet; but we have evidence of that accuracy of mind on the part of the historian that leaves little doubt that he is describing what he had seen, and that no doubt he was a witness to the truth of that which he had observed. It is wonderful how, since I was a boy, the discoveries in Nineveh, Greece, and other places have verified the old historians, and in some cases more than verified them. Careless writing was certainly not a characteristic of those writers, and I think there is great reason to accept this statement of Procopius.

Professor ORCHARD.—The lecturer has done three things. He has helped to establish the veracity and trustworthiness of Procopius as a writer. He has done something in finding certain evidences of Tigisis and of these wonderful pillars. And he has



done something in getting into touch with the Constantine Archæological Society. I am sure we wish success to that society in its future efforts to discover these wonderful memorials of Joshua's conquest in Canaan. If that society does not find them we shall heartily desire that our lecturer, or another gentleman equally well fitted, should go out with the object of completing the investigations. That these pillars exist cannot, I think, be doubted; so we shall look forward with hope, as well as interest, to the future.

MR. WOODFORD PILKINGTON, C.E.—I must say that I think the lecture we have heard to-night is one of those instances of the great use of popular institutions of this kind. The Victoria Institute was so called after her late gracious Majesty, and I only hope it may continue to be as popular in the present reign as it was in her own long reign. Institutions of this sort, which are outside purely technical institutions, render a great service to the country. I belong to one of those technical institutions (the Civil Engineers), and it is very difficult to awaken popular interest in them, because they are so purely technical. But institutions of this kind can be made popular, and I think our experience to-night affords a remarkable instance of the way these institutions do that. Some may say, "Well, Mr. Rouse went after a stone that he never found." But he found a great many interesting facts in connection with that stone, and got himself connected with societies in France which I hope will lead to its ultimate discovery.

I do think Mr. Rouse has developed a gift, latterly, very much in the direction in which a kind Providence has invested him, viz., a power to make himself generally useful.

The subject to-night as regards the history of these stones of Joshua is very interesting. The discovery of stones in modern times has done much, as we all know, towards throwing light upon the statements of the Bible in days when rationalism is doing so much with the object of disproving them. The Moabite stone is a case in point of peculiar interest. One of the most wonderful discoveries of this age was the reading of the hieroglyphics of Egypt when a Frenchman found out their interpretation.

I hope every opportunity will be given to Mr. Rouse to prosecute his work, and I am sure we must all be deeply grateful to him for bringing forward this interesting subject.

MR. ROUSE having replied, the Meeting separated.

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